

Hingtgen, Robert J

From: Newberry Springs <newberrysprings@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 3:43 PM
To: Hingtgen, Robert J
Subject: Soitec Solar
Attachments: San Diego Solar Letter 030314.pages; San Diego Solar Letter 030314.pdf

Dear Mr. Hingtgen,

Attached is a letter in .PAGES format and also as a PDF.

Please include the letter in the public record on Soitec Solar's application for PV solar installations in the community of Boulevard.

Cordially,

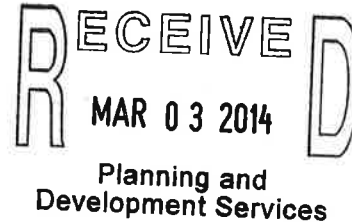
Ted Stimpfel
Newberry Springs Community Alliance

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March 3, 2014

Robert Hingtgen
County of San Diego
Planning & Development Services
5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 110
San Diego, CA 92123



SENT ELECTRONICALLY VIA: robert.hingtgen@sdcounty.ca.gov

Comments on Soitec Solar Development Program Environmental Impact Report: 3800 12-010; Tierra Del Sol, 3300 12-010 (MUP), 3600 12-005 (REZ), 3921 77-046-01 (AP); Rugged Solar, 3300 12-007 (MUP); Environmental LOG NO.: 3910 120005(ER) & Request of re-circulation of a revised DEIR

Dear Mr. Hingtgen,

Please include these comments in the public record on Soitec Solar's four development projects that are planned to cover almost 1,500 acres in the rural community of Boulevard. Our comments are based upon first-hand experience with Soitec's 1.5 MW Newberry Solar 1 project that is in our community of Newberry Springs which is located 20 miles east of Barstow.

Soitec's Newberry Springs site has 60 CPV trackers on 27 acres of a larger parcel located on Mountain View Road. This industrial facility is directly across the street from residences as proposed for the Boulevard projects.

Main issues as observed from our impacted rural desert neighborhood in Newberry Springs:

1. Recent media coverage reports Soitec's Mike Armstrong identified their Newberry Springs project as a "test site". It was never promoted nor identified as such that we are aware of.
2. Misrepresentations in Soitec's CEQA Addendum to a Mitigated Negative Declaration for an existing Conditional Use Permit (CUP) (Solutions for Utilities, Inc), to replace regular PV (6- 7 feet high) with Soitec/Concentrix CPV trackers (27.5 feet high):
(<http://sbcounty.gov/Uploads/lus/Desert/mitigatedNegativeDeclaration.pdf>)
3. CUP statements of "minimal grading", "no glare", and "minimal visual impacts" have proven untrue.
4. Soitec's on-site well had insufficient capacity for the amount of water required for dust control during construction and off-site water had to be trucked in.
5. Soitec announced the site was complete in July 2013; however, visible ongoing problems with a number of trackers continue to this date.

6. The Newberry Springs CUP at page 2 states that the site will be unmanned and that maintenance and repair crews will be dispatched as needed; which is now happening almost daily, including holidays, demonstrating that the equipment appears flawed.
7. Employees have stated that they were having problems with dust infiltration into the inverters and gears and recently built metal shelters around the inverter stations.
8. Blinding glare from the trackers have been reported from Interstate-40 and distracting glare from other locations.
9. Soitec has failed to provide contact information for emergency first responders and for public complaints, such as for glare, at its Newberry Springs facility.
10. Ongoing complaints from adjacent neighbors of increased blowing sand onto their properties, and Mountain View Road.
11. Increased sand sweeping by County road crews since the site was clear graded for Soitec's project.
12. Apparent non-compliance with CUP:
 - The CUP stated 3 different size CPV units would be used ranging from 6-22 kW and 21- 27.5 feet tall, with shorter units to be installed closest to Mountain View Road neighbors (CUP page 3 Table 1)
 - According to Soitec's own July 2013 press release, the Newberry Springs trackers are their newest fifth generation 28kW CX-S530 systems, manufactured in their San Diego facility:
http://www.soitec.com/pdf/newberry_solar_plant_announcement_press_release_final.pdf
 - Failure to control blown sand.
 - Road improvements, including widening pavement to 26 feet, do not seem to have been completed.
 - Tortoise fencing has not been maintained, with evident gaps under the chain line.

These reports from KABC News and the Newberry Springs Community Alliance reflect the community's feeling of being duped by Soitec:

- http://abclocal.go.com/kabc/story?section=news/local/inland_empire&id=9044137
- <http://newberryspringsinfo.com/Alliance/SolarNotice.html>

We strongly recommend a site visit to Newberry Springs, without advance notice to Soitec, so you can see what we see every day—an obviously visually intrusive, high-maintenance project, with questionable reliability, that is definitely not ready for utility scale development. Please contact us with any questions at (760) 475-8340 or newberrysprings@hotmail.com.

Cordially,

/Ted Stimpfel/

Ted Stimpfel, government liaison
Newberry Springs Community Alliance

